

A
Plea for the Poor,

By a

COLLECTION

Of Sundry SCRIPTURES

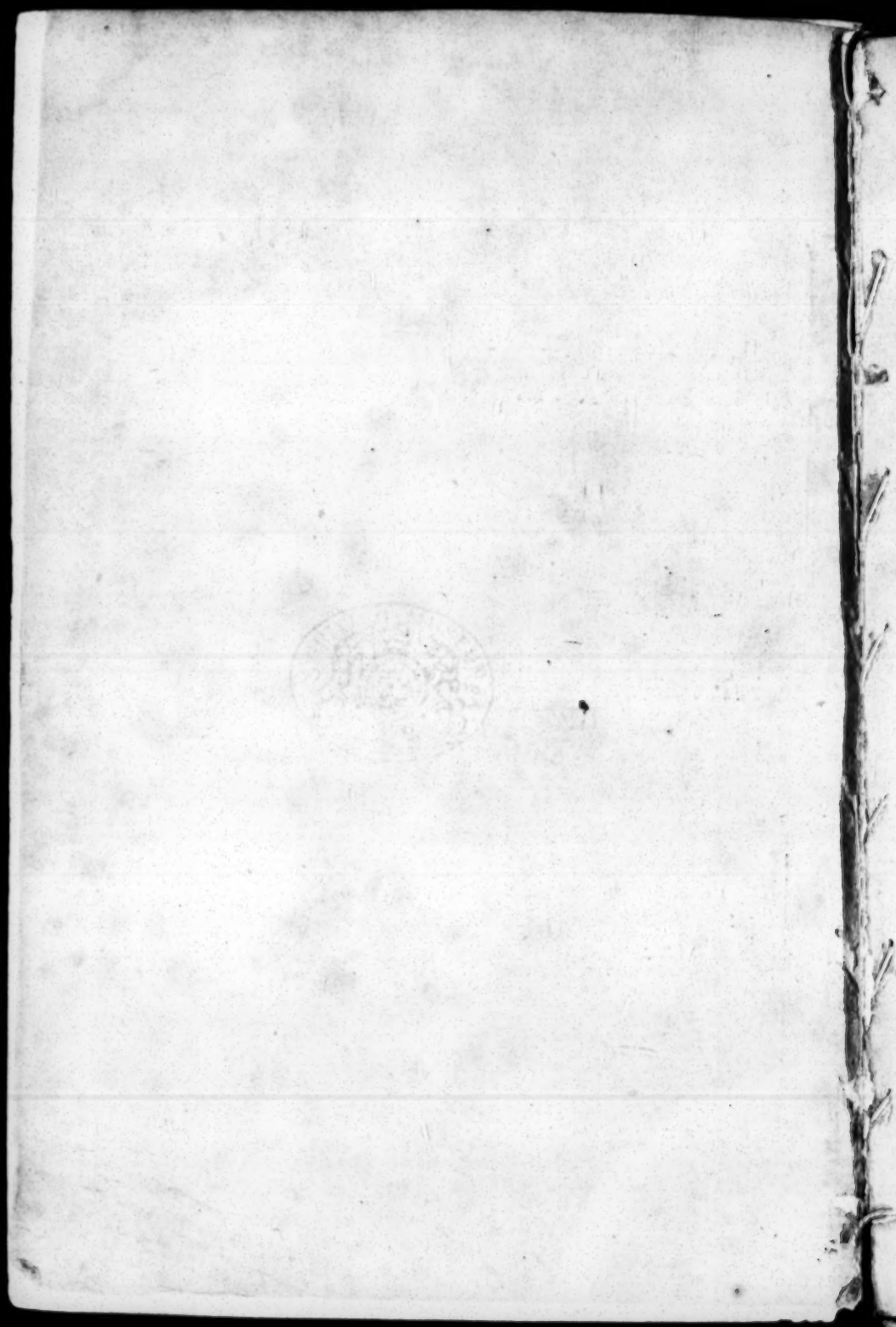
Out of the *King's* *Office*
x

Old and New Testament.

Recommended to the Perusal and
Consideration of all that own they
were given forth by Divine Inspi-
ration.

*To do Good, and to Communicate, forget
not : for with such Sacrifices God is well
pleased, Heb. xiii. 16.*

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A
Plea for the Poor ;
BY A
COLLECTION
Of Sundry Scriptures
Out of the
Old and New-Testament.

DEAR *Friends, Brethren, and Sisters,* Called of God in Christ Jesus, to the Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth, that you may shew forth the Vertue of him that hath called you out of Darkness into his marvellous Light, by bringing forth the Fruits of the Holy Spirit in Love unfeigned,
Amen.

The Chief end of the following Collection of the Holy Scriptures relating to Charity, is for the stirring up of the Negligent to a more fervent and zealous Discharge of their Duty towards the Poor; and also for the opening the Understandings of such as are not so clearly convinced of their Duty in this respect, if any such there be, so that all may be left without Excuse; for as much as it doth plainly appear by the Holy Scriptures, that Charity to the Poor is an Incumbent and Indispensable Duty upon all Christians, as the Lord shall bless them with this Worlds Goods.

And this will plainly appear, if we will take notice of the Command of God, and the Practices, Exhortations and Admonitions of his Servants in every Dispensation, both before and from the giving forth of the *Mosaical* Law, to the Establishment of the Churches in the Apostles days.

Note, Thus we may plainly see and understand, that in the giving forth

forth of the Law by the Hand of *Moses*, (the true Servant and Prophet of the Lord) what a peculiar Care was taken of the **Poor** and **Needy**, and that from the Command of the Lord unto the Church of the Jews in the Wilderness, and was binding unto them in after Ages, as will appear by the Writings of the Prophets, supposed to be before the Law given by God to *Moses*.

We read in the Book of *Job*, the Servant of the Lord, how his bowels yearned to the Poor and Helpless, and how his Spirit Simpathized with them in their Distress; whereby it may be clearly seen, that in Charity as well as in Patience *Job* was a great **Example** unto the Age he then lived in; and his good Works are Recorded with the rest of the Righteous, that after Ages might be found in the **Practice** of the same, according to their Abilities; for you may Read *Job* 29. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. what he saith himself in these words: ‘ When
‘ the ear heard me, then it blessed
‘ me; and when the eye saw me, it
A 3 ‘ gave

‘ gave witness unto me : Because I de-
 ‘ livered the Poor that cried, and the
 ‘ Fatherless, and him that had none
 ‘ to help him. The blessing of him
 ‘ that was ready to perish, came up-
 ‘ on me : and I caused the Widows
 ‘ heart to sing for Joy. I put on
 ‘ righteousness, and it cloathed me ;
 ‘ my judgment was as a robe and
 ‘ diadem, I was eyes to the blind,
 ‘ and feet was I to the lame ; I was
 ‘ Father to the **Poor**, and the cause
 ‘ I knew not, I searched out. *Job*
 ‘ 30. 25. Did not I weep for him
 ‘ that was in trouble, was not my
 ‘ Soul grieved for the **Poor** ?

Job 31. 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.
 ‘ If I have with-held from the **Poor**
 ‘ their desire, &c. or have eaten my mor-
 ‘ sel alone ; and the *Fatherless* have
 ‘ not eaten thereof ; if I have seen
 ‘ any perish for want of cloathing, or
 ‘ any **Poor** without covering ; if his
 ‘ loyns have not blessed me, &c. If
 ‘ I have lift up my hand against the
 ‘ *Fatherless*, when I saw my help in
 ‘ the gate, &c. Then let mine arm fall
 ‘ from

[7]

‘ from the shoulder blade, and my
‘ arm be broken from the bone ; for
‘ destruction from God was a terror
‘ to me, and by reason of his highness
‘ I could not endure.

Levit. 19. 1, 2. & 9, 10. ‘ And
‘ the Lord said unto *Moses*, speak un-
‘ to the Congregation of the Children
‘ of *Israel*, and say unto them, ye
‘ shall be Holy, for I the Lord your
‘ God am Holy, &c. When ye
‘ reap the Harvest of your Land, thou
‘ shalt not wholly reap the corners
‘ of thy Field ; neither shalt thou ga-
‘ ther the gleanings of thy Harvest ;
‘ thou shalt leave them for the **poor**
‘ and Stranger, I am the Lord your
‘ God ; and *Chap. 23. 22.* Thou
‘ shalt not make clean riddance of the
‘ corners of thy Field when thou Rea-
‘ pest, neither shalt thou gather any
‘ of the gleanings of thy Harvest ;
‘ thou shalt leave them unto the
‘ **poor**.

Deut. 23. 19. ‘ When thou cut-
‘ test down the Harvest in thy Field,
A 4 ‘ And

[5]

‘ and hast forgot a Sheaf in the Field,
‘ thou shalt not go again to fetch it,
‘ it shall be for the *Stranger*, the *Fa-*
‘ *therless* and the *Widow*, that the Lord
‘ thy God may bless thee in all the
‘ works of thine hands.

Deut. 15. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. ‘ If
‘ there be a **poor** man of thy bre-
‘ thren within any of thy Gates,
‘ in the Land which the Lord thy
‘ God giveth thee, thou shalt not
‘ harden thy heart, nor shut thine
‘ hand from thy **poor** Brother. But
‘ thou shalt open thine hand wide
‘ unto him, and shalt surely lend
‘ him sufficient for his need, in that
‘ which he wanteth. Beware that
‘ there be not a thought in thy wick-
‘ ed heart, saying, the seventh Year
‘ of Release is at hand, and thy Eye
‘ be evil against thy **poor** Brother,
‘ and thou givest him nought, and he
‘ cry unto the Lord against thee, and
‘ it be Sin unto thee: Thou shalt sure-
‘ ly give him, and thine heart shall
‘ not be grieved when thou givest
‘ unto him; because for this thing,
‘ the

‘ the Lord thy God shall bless thee
‘ in all thy works, and in all that
‘ thou puttest thine hand unto. For
‘ the **Poor** shall never cease out of
‘ the Land; therefore I Command
‘ thee, saying, open thine hand wide
‘ unto thy Brother, to thy **Poor**, and
‘ to thy **Needy** in thy Land.

Levit. 25. 35, 36. ‘ If thy Bro-
‘ ther be waxen **Poor**, and be fallen
‘ into decay with thee, then thou shalt
‘ relieve him, yea, though he be a
‘ Stranger, or a Sojourner, that he
‘ may live with thee.

David, who was a Man after
Gods own heart, and a King and
Prophet in *Israel*; how often he was
concern’d for the Cause of the **Poor**,
will plainly appear to them that will
read his *Psalms*; wherein we may see
the Cause of the **Poor** often come
before him, we shall instance a few
Places.

Psal. 41. 1, 2. ‘ Blessed is he that
‘ considereth the **Poor**, the Lord will
‘ deliver

‘ deliver him in the time of trouble;
‘ the Lord will prosper him, and
‘ keep him alive, and he shall be blef-
‘ sed upon the Earth, and thou wilt
‘ not deliver him into the will of his
‘ Enemies. See the blessing the Lord
hath in store for them that truly con-
sidereth the Cause of the **Poor**; and
Psal 82. 3, 4. he giveth this Exhorta-
tion: ‘ Defend the **Poor** and *Father-*
‘ *less*, do Justice to the *Afflicted* and
‘ **Needy**; deliver the **Poor** and
‘ **Needy**, rid them out of the hand of
‘ the Wicked. And *Psal.* 112. 1, 4,
‘ 5, 9. ‘ Blessed is the Man that
‘ feareth the Lord, that delighteth in
‘ his Commandments. — Unto the
‘ Upright there ariseth Light out of
‘ Darkness, he is Gracious, and full
‘ of Compassion, and Righteous; a
‘ good Man sheweth favour and lend-
‘ eth, he will guide his Affairs with
‘ Discretion; he hath dispersed, he
‘ hath given to the **Poor**, his Righte-
‘ ousness endureth for ever. And *Psal.*
‘ 140. 12. I know that the Lord
‘ will maintain the Cause of the *Af-*
‘ *licted*, and the Cause of the **Poor**.

Solomon

Solomon also had the Cause of the
¶ *Poor* before him, and said, *Prov.* 14.
21, 31. ' He that hath mercy on the
' ¶ *Poor*, happy is he; he who op-
' presseth the *Poor*, reproacheth his
' Maker; but he that honoureth him,
' hath mercy on the ¶ *Poor*.

Prov. 11. 24, 25. ' There is that
' scattereth, and yet increaseth, &c.
' The Liberal Soul shall be made Fat,
' and he who watereth, shall be wa-
' tered himself.

Prov. 20. 21. ' The *Poor* is even
' hated of his Neighbour, but the
' Rich hath many Friends. But in
' reproof to this Spirit, he saith: ' He
' that despiseth his Neighbour Sin-
' neth, but he that hath mercy on
' the ¶ *Poor*, happy is he.

Prov. 21. 13. ' Whoso stoppeth
' his Ears to the Cry of the *Poor*, he
' also shall cry himself, but shall not
' be heard.

Prov.

Prov. 19. 17. ' He that hath pity
' on the *Poor*, lendeth to the Lord,
' and that which he hath given, will
' he pay him again.

Prov. 22. 9. ' He that hath a boun-
' tiful Eye shall be blessed, for he gi-
' veth of his bread to the *Poor*.

Prov. 28. 27. ' He that giveth
' unto the *Poor* shall not lack; but he
' that hideth his Eyes shall have many
' a Curse.

The Prophet *Isaiah* speaking in the
Name of the Lord unto the House of
Jacob, and shewing of them their Sins,
and reprovng their Formalities in
their degeneration, shewed plainly un-
to them the Fast that he had not, and
also which he had chosen. And one
mark of the Fast which the Lord hath
chosen, is described in these words,
(*Isa. 58. 7.*) *Is it not to deal thy Bread*
to the Hungry, and that thou bring the
Poor that are cast out to thy House;
when thou seest the Naked that thou co-
ver him, and that thou hide not thy self
from

from thine own flesh. And the Prophet Ezekiel, in describing the marks of a Just Man, this is one, *that he hath given his Bread to the Hungry, and covered the Naked with a Garment,* Ezek. 18. 7.

Note, Many more Instances might be produced out of the Books of the Prophets, to shew the Godly and sincere compassionate concern that remained upon the hearts of the Righteous for the **Poor** and **Needy**, and them that were in *Distress* and *Trouble*. But those Scriptures here quoted are sufficient for the Proof hereof; as also that the Commands of the Lord given by *Moses* to the Church of the Jews in the Wilderness, was binding unto them in after Ages, as the Writings of the Prophets testify.

The Church of the Jews also, when Jesus Christ was upon the Earth, was in the Practice of Charity to the **Poor**, as doth plainly appear by the words of Jesus, *Mat. 12. 41.* *And Jesus sat over against the Treasury, and beheld the People cast Money into the Treasury, and many that were Rich cast in much; and there*

there came a certain ~~Poor~~ Widow, and she threw in two Mites, which make a Farthing; and he called unto him his Disciples, and saith unto them, verily I say unto you, that this Poor Widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the Treasury, for all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

And what a great value Jesus put on Charity, will be clearly seen, if we shall read and observe what he saith, when he giveth a description of the General and Last Day of Judgment, Matth. 25. 31. to the end. When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all Nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was

an hungred, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in : Naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me ; I was in Prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee ? or thirsty, and gave thee drink ? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in ? or naked, and clothed thee ? Or when saw we thee sick, or in Prison, and came unto thee ? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me not in : naked, and ye clothed me not : sick, and in Prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or a thirst, or naked, or a stranger, or sick, or in Prison, and did

did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, verily I say unto you, In as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the Righteous into Life Eternal.

Note, Now wherefore did our Lord set forth so plainly and fully the end of the Righteous, and Unrighteous, but that we might hear him, and be warned and prepared for that Day, by being found doing the Sayings of Christ, that so our Building may stand in the day of Tryal, so shall we be accepted of the Father in the beloved. And it doth very clearly appear, that the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord Jesus were very strict in the discharge of their Duty, in this as well as in other respects; For after the Ascension of our Lord, according to the Command of Jesus, they departed not from Jerusalem, but waited for the Promise of the Father; which, saith he ye have heard of me, &c. And they continued with one accord and the Promise of the Father they did receive; and they

they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with Tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance, Acts 2. 4. And Acts 4. 31, 32. 33, 34, 35. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness; and the multitude of them that believed were of one Heart, and of one Soul, and with great power gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great Grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that **Lacked**; for as many as were Possessors of Lands or Houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the Apostles feet, and distribution was made unto every Man according as he had need. Now this is very observeable, that the Power and Spirit of the Lord Jesus so mightily prevail'd upon the hearts of the Believers, that they were of one Heart and Soul; and great Care was upon the Apostles to discharge their Duty that none might Lack, but that a Distribution was made to every Man according to his Need: So that by this means, the Believers that were **1000** were taken Care of,

and were not sent to Unbelievers to be relieved. But when the number of Disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring among the *Grecians* because their Widows were neglected in the daily Ministration; then the Twelve called the multitude of the Disciples unto them, and said, *It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve Tables; wherefore Brethren, look you out among you seven Men of honest Report, full of the Holy Ghost, and Wisdom, whom we may appoint over this Business; but we will give our selves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the word.* So then the Apostles were somewhat eased, and the Deacons supplied that Service. And as Christianity increased, and Churches and Congregations were gathered, the Apostles in the Power and Wisdom of Christ gave forth many Exhortations to the Believers that they might be Charitable; and *Paul* ordered that Contributions should be made for the Saints, in the Churches of *Corinth* and *Galatia*, 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. *Now concerning the Collection for the Saints, as I have given order*

order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye; upon the first day of the Week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him. And we doubt not but that it will very freely be granted, that the Apostle Paul had the mind of Christ in Charity (to the ~~1000~~ Saints) as well as in other Matters committed unto his Charge. And how many Exhortations on this account, as well as in other respects are left upon Record (for our Learning) that we might be found walking in the same steps that they walked in. And he argueth very substantially and convincingly from the Members of the Natural Body, Rom. Chap. 12. 4, 5. Shewing thereby that we being many are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another; and hereby he sheweth the Believers how they ought to live in Love as Members of one Body (of which Christ is Head) to serve one another; and therefore he Exhorted them, and said, ver. 9, 10. Let Love be without dissimulation, abhor that which is Evil, cleave to that which is Good; be kindly affectionated one to another with Brotherly Love, &c. ver.

13. *Distributing to the Necessity of the Saints, given to Hospitality, ver. 15. Rejoyce with them that rejoyce, and Weep with them that weep.* Thus did that Heavenly Man Labour in the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, to keep the Believers in that Spirit wherein they might in all Conditions Simpathize one with another; that so as Members of one Body they might be truly helpful one unto another, serving one another in the Love of Christ, which was abundantly shed abroad in the Believers Hearts in those days. Also the same Apostle in his Epistle to his Son *Timothy*, bids him (1 *Tim.* ch. 6. ver. 17, 18, 19.) *Charge them that are rich in this World, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches, but in the Living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to Distribute, willing to Communicate; laying up a Good Foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on Eternal Life.* And *Hebrews* 13. 16. *But to do Good and Communicate forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased.* Like-
wise

wise *John* the beloved Disciple of the
 Lord Jesus, whose Soul was filled
 with the Love of God, he speaketh
 very fully and clearly to this matter,
 whereby we may plainly perceive in
 whom the Love of God dwells, and in
 whom not, 1 *John* 3. 16, 17, 18.
*Hereby perceive we the Love of God, be-
 cause he laid down his Life for us,
 and we ought to lay down our Lives for
 the Brethren; but whoso hath this Worlds
 Goods, and seeth his Brother have need,
 and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion
 from him, how dwelleth the Love of God
 in him; my little Children, let us not
 love in word, neither in Tongue, but in
 Deed and in Truth; and hereby we know
 that we are of the Truth, and shall assure
 our hearts before him. (And there is
 no other way for the People of God
 to know the Seal of Assurance before
 the Lord, and a laying hold of Eternal
 Life, but by witnessing the love of
 Christ to dwell in their Hearts;) and
 hereby will the true Believers in the
 Lord Jesus shew forth the Vertue of
 him, that have called them out of
 Darkness into his marvellous Light;*
 B 3 by

by which all Men shall know that they are his Disciples, if they dwell in his Love. For it is alone in this Love that they have a true Sense one of another, and a Simpathizing in all Exercises one with another, and are ready to do Good, to Cherish Help and Succour in the time of Need, and so be like him that hath called them, who was full of Compassion to the **Poor** and **Needy**, and while he was on Earth, went about doing Good; thereby leaving us an Example, that we should follow his Steps.

Now by these Scriptures that are here Collected, it may be clearly seen, that in all Dispensations it was an Incumbent and Indispensable Duty upon the People of the Lord to take sufficient Care of the **Poor**; and also how Harmonious both the Old and New Testament is in this, as well as in other Matters; whereby we may perceive that the People of God in every Age were of one Heart and Mind; and therefore our hearty desires are, that this may be a Motive to stir up those that have been *Remiss* and

and *Negligent* in the Discharge of their
Duty to the ~~Poor~~ and ~~Needy~~; that
so they may escape that Sentence of
the Lord Jesus, *Depart ye Cursed into
Everlasting Fire; for I was an Hungred,
and ye gave me no Meat, &c. Mat. 25.*
And may receive the Sentence of *Come
ye Blessed of my Father Inherit the King-
dom prepared for you from the Founda-
tion of the World, for I was an Hungry
and ye gave me Meat, &c.*

Quarterly Meeting at }
Cogeshall the 18th of }
1st Month, 1707.

Postscript.

IN Order that the Receivers of Charity may be duly Qualified, and worthy of such Charity, it pleases God to open the Hearts of the Brethren to Communicate to them ; they ought to Consider and Understand,

That all Charitable Collections that were made in the Primitive Churches in the Apostles Days was for the Poor Saints. So that all Receivers ought to be such, as are come in some measure into a State of Sanctification, and therein Persevere ; and that have been Diligent in their Vocations, and have diligently followed every good Work, and so continued walking worthy of the mercy of God, in opening their Brethrens Hearts in Charity towards them, by being Content, and gratefully acknowledging the Mercies they enjoy,

Postscript.

joy, and be Content with the things that they have, and endeavour to Discharge their Duty as much as in them lies, in Care and Industry, and to beware of an Idle and Sloathful Spirit, according to these Scriptures following.

The Industry of a Good Wife is set forth at large, *Prov. 31.*

He also who is Sloathful in his work, is Brother to him who is a great Waster, Prov. 18. 9.

The way of the Slothful Man is as an Hedge of Thorns, Prov. 15. 19.

The Sluggard will not Plow by reason of the Cold; therefore shall he Beg in Harvest, and have nothing, Proverbs 20. 4.

He who Tilleth his Land shall be satisfied with Bread; but he that follows vain Persons, is void of Understanding, Prov. 12. 11.

He who loveth Pleasure shall be a Poor Man, &c.—The desire of the Slothful killeth him, for his hand refuseth to Labour, Prov. 21. 17. 25.

For the Drunkard and the Glutton shall come to Poverty, and Drowsiness shall

shall Cloath a Man with Rags, Prov. 23. 21.

This was the Iniquity of thy Sister Sodom, abundance of Idleness was in her, Ezek. 16. 49.

By much Slothfulness the Building decays, and through Idleness of the Hands the House droppeth through, Eccles. 10. 18.

Go to the Ant thou Sluggard, Consider her ways and be wise, Prov. 6. 6.

Paul to the Philippians says, 4. 11. Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learnt in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content.

12th, I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where, and in all things I am Instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

I have Coveted no Mans Silver, or Gold, or Apparel, yea, your selves know that these hands have Ministred unto my Necessities, and them that were with me.

I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and

Postscript.

and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive, Acts 20. 33, 34, 35.

2 Thes. 3. 8. Neither did we eat any Mans Bread for nought, but with Labour and Travail Night and Day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you.

2 Thes. 3. 10. For even when we were with you, this we Commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should they eat.

2 Thes. 3. 11. For we hear there are some among you that walk disorderly, working not at all, but are busie Bodies.

2 Thes. 3. 12. Now them that are such, we Command and Exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work and eat their own Bread.

2 Thes. 3. 14. And if any Man obey not our word by this Epistle, Note that Man, and have no Company with him, that he may be ashamed.

2 Thes. 3. 15. Yet count him not as an Enemy, but Admonish him as a Brother.

2 Tim.

Postscript.

1 Tim. 5. 8. *But if any Provide not for his own, and especially those of his own House, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.*

Now that the Church ought Principally to have a Regard to Elders and Widows indeed in their Charity, that have walked blamelessly, see 1 Tim. Ch. 5. yet not so as to exclude doing good as Necessity Requires.

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